United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1490
1 October 1993

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council last night votes to extend UNROFOR's by 24 hours; expected to meet again this evening to vote on further extension.

- Guyana, Peru, Swaziland, Venezuela, India, Greece, Austria and Malta among speakers in General Assembly's general debate today.

- Portugal, Spain, Kuwait, Finland, Mauritius, Turkey, Gabon and Seychelles among speakers in general debate yesterday.

- Participants at All Somali Peace Conference in Mogadishu express firm support for United Nations efforts in Somalia; call for deployment of UNOSOM II forces throughout country and condemn attacks on them.

- Chief of Emergency Division of Department of Humanitarian Affairs makes first request to NATO to put its forces on alert, in case they are needed to deal with effects of earthquake in India; request is result of recent agreement between United Nations and NATO.

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The Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, decided yesterday evening to extend the mandate of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) for 24 hours. By unanimously adopting resolution 869 (1993), the Council reiterated its determination to ensure UNPROFOR's security and freedom of movement. The Council was expected to meet again this evening to vote on a further extension of the mandate.

UNPROFOR was first established on 21 February 1992 for an initial period of 12 months. Its mandate was extended for an interim period until 31 March this year, and for an additional six months until 30 September. At present, the Force is principally deployed in three Republics: Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The Secretary-General had recommended in a report that the Council renew the Force's mandate for an additional six months. The Government of Croatia

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had stated, however, that it could not accept prolongation of the mandate unless there were major changes in it based on existing Council resolutions and reports of the Secretary-General, particularly in the report known as the "Vance Plan".

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The President of Guyana, Cheddi Jagan, this morning thanked the Members of the General Assembly for unanimously electing his country to the Presidency of the forty-eighth session, saying that it showed that all States, irrespective of their size, could play an important role in the work of the United Nations. He went on to say that, notwithstanding the Organization's accomplishments, it had not fulfilled the high aspirations of its creators. Colonialism survived in different forms, evident in the ever-widening gap between the developed and developing countries, and in the dependence of impoverished millions on the largesse of a few.

Science and technology, he continued, had the capacity to eradicate poverty, but instead both developed and developing countries had only half the growth rate of a decade ago and the catastrophic phenomenon of "jobless growth". How could the poor Third World countries compete in this "borderless world" when the majority were light-years behind in human resource development and were burdened by unconscionable debt payments, he asked. It was not enough to treat the symptoms of the global malaise; radical reforms were urgently needed.

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In an address to the General Assembly today, Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori Fujimori said that his country had suffered as a result of hyperinflation, isolation from the international financial community, terrorism, drug trafficking, corruption and debt. The so-called "traditional democracy" had not solved any of Peru's problems; it was nothing more than a struggle among privileged minorities, who rotated in power while the country sank into misery. In such circumstances, each country had to find its own course and its own solutions.

Citing the terrorist activities of Shining Path, the President said that a crisis had been reached and that his responsibility was to govern Peru, not to serve as its undertaker. The anti-terrorist strategy which had been implemented had reinstated law, order and authority throughout the country. The Government had always fulfilled its responsibility to respect the principles of the Geneva Convention, but would not give up its right to fight terrorism. If the terrorists wanted peace, they should end all violence immediately. A new and exemplary democracy was being formed in Peru, he said, and its the people would soon have the opportunity to decide on a Constitution that would incorporate major reforms guaranteeing peace and progress.

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King Mswati III of Swaziland told the General Assembly today that his country belived in the principle of rule by consensus of the people. When the effects of global political reform began to be felt in the Kingdom, all Swazis were given the opportunity to offer their opinions on the need for reform. The result was a number of recommendations by the majority of the people for democratic reforms, the most important of which concerned changes in the electoral system to allow direct and accountable representation in Parliament. Those reforms demonstrated the importance Swaziland placed on unity and on the principle of meeting fresh challenges together.

King Mswati expressed grave concern at the situation in Somalia, where, he said, a formula for lasting peace still could not be found despite the efforts of the large United Nations force. The country would need international support for the foreseeable future, despite the enormous drain on limited resources. He expressed hope for a peaceful transition to majority rule in South Africa, and said economic and trade sanctions against the country should be lifted. He appealed to the leaders of all parties there to exercise maximum restraint so that violence would not threaten next year's elections, adding that all South Africans must be represented at the ongoing negotiations.

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The Foreign Minister of Venezuela, Fernando Ochoa Antich, told the General Assembly today that from its time in the Security Council, his country was filled with disquiet at the instability that prevailed in many parts of the world and the absence of established values or clear directions. But, he added, a few issues had come to the fore which could be transformed into the prevalent ideology of mankind, namely human rights, the defence of democracy and the protection of the environment.

Venezuela, he continued, was greatly concerned by what was happening on its Amazonian border. Over the past five years, illegal mining had brought about an invasion which had had disastrous results for the environment and had created a climate of violence previously unknown in the area. The phenomenon, he warned, had reached dimensions beyond the control of individual States. But all the countries of the Amazon Basin had clearly proclaimed their sovereignty over the land in question and each country in the region was making special efforts to take up the challenge of sustainable development in a zone where the ecological balance was so precarious.

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India's Foreign Minister, Dinesh Singh, told the General Assembly today that the United Nations should reiterate the fundamental principles of respect for national sovereignty, territorial integrity and the sovereign equality of nation States. In the post-cold war world, conflicts had many complex causes, and peace could not be imposed through unilateral external intervention. He said that India was ready to initiate a dialogue with Pakistan to build mutual confidence and to promote stability in the region.

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The increase in United Nations peace-keeping operations was a matter of comfort and concern, the Foreign Minister continued. All avenues for the peaceful settlement of disputes should be exhausted before resorting to a peace-keeping operation. Decisions should be taken in a democratic way, with the consent of all States parties to a dispute. Operations should have a specific mandate and a clear time-frame. He also stressed the need for a global partnership for development, with developing countries participating in macro-economic coordination and decision-making. Developed countries should promote economic liberalization by eliminating protectionist barriers and should increase capital flows to developing countries to offset the burdens of debt. The Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) talks should be concluded successfully so as to enhance market access for developing countries, he said.

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Michael Papaconstantinou, Greece's Minister for Foreign Affairs, today proposed the convening of a United Nations summit in Greece in the year 2000 to adopt a global agenda for the next century. He said the General Assembly could establish an ad hoc preparatory committee or working group to prepare for the substantial and organizational aspects of the summit. He went on to express concern at the lack of progress in solving the problem of Cyprus, which was still occupied and divided. He called on Turkey to fully assume its responsibilities and exercise its decisive influence with the Turkish-Cypriot leaders who, he said, had been unwilling to engage in meaningful negotiations.

The situation in the former Yugoslavia could only be resolved through a political settlement agreed upon by all parties, he said, adding that any acceptable opportunity for peace should be seized. The main responsibility for the reconstruction of the former Yugoslavia would rest with the European Community, and Greece was ready to host an international meeting of donors and neighbouring countries. Greece was also aware of the need to assist Albania to overcome economic difficulties and solidify its democratic institutions. He urged the Albanian Government to respect fundamental minority rights, particularly in the fields of education and religion. Those rights should not be denied to the Greek minority, nor to any minority anywhere, he said.

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Guido de Marco, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta, today said that the international community had yet to fully exploit the uniqueness and relevance of the General Assembly. It was the only global forum where all States were full and permanent Members, with an equal say regardless of size, power or wealth, where all issues could be considered in their entirety, and where the process of decision-making was also one of consensus-building. The Assembly had a unique and preeminent role, and should be at the centre of the process of regenerating the United Nations.

The United Nations lacked a capacity to deal comprehensively with the multiple issues of development, and should build a more significant relationship with the Bretton Woods Institutions, he said. The role of the

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Trusteeship Council should be expanded. The concept of trusteeship lay at the core of the Organization, and the Council could hold in trust areas of common concern to humanity, such as the environment, extra-territorial zones and the rights of future generations. He stressed the importance of the Mediterranean region, which linked three continents, and said Malta supported the establishment of a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean as a forum for political, economic and social dialogue.

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José Manuel Durao Barroso, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal, said yesterday in the General Assembly that his country, with its historic links to Africa, believed that only by increasing trade, economic ties and humanitarian assistance could the international community support democratization and progress on the continent. With regard to Angola, he called for new efforts to re-establish the cease-fire and to safeguard the democratic process interrupted by the lack of acceptance by the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) of the results of elections last year. He urged UNITA to return to the negotiating table. He also outlined Portugal's support for the peace process in Mozambique, its active contribution to the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) and its pledge of financial support to the country.

On the question of East Timor, he applauded the efforts of the Secretary-General and the other negotiators, under whose auspices talks had been held with Indonesia aimed at resolving the issue. He called on all Governments and human rights organizations to keep a close eye on the situation in East Timor.

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Alois Mock, the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria, speaking in the general debate today, focused on the achievements and challenges of the World Conference on Human Rights, which his country hosted in June. He said the "Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action" was an important advance in the international protection of all human rights; when the World Conference came up for discussion in the Assembly, those accomplishments should be translated into concrete action in all areas, from the rights of women and children to the integration of the handicapped, from the plight of indigenous people and the rights of minorities to the rights of nations and people to develop.

The increasing consensus in the Security Council and its new decision-making capability had contributed to the expansion of peace-keeping operations and their personnel needs, Dr. Mock said. Austria welcomed that expansion and had established a centre to train national and international experts in the civilian responsibilities involved in peace-keeping and peace-building. The United Nations had recently conducted "Exercise 93", a large-scale international action, in Austria in order to achieve the optimum management and coordination of military and civilian organizations in responding to disasters, he said.

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Javier Solana Madariaga, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain, speaking in the general debate yesterday, expressed his country's support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative for the holding of a referendum on self-determination in Western Sahara. Spain also supported the process of intergration in the north of Africa and the strengthening of the Euro-Mahgrebi links.

In Latin America, Mr. Solana continued, democracy had been enhanced by a number of forums such as the Rio Group, the Central American summits and the Ibero-American summits. He hoped international law and democracy would guide the restoration of democratic legality in Haiti and inspire the peace process in El Salvador. He reiterated his Government's decision to continue the process of negotiation on the decolonization of Gibraltar with the United Kingdom. It should be based, he stressed, on the doctrine established by the General Assembly according to which the decolonization of Gibraltar was not a case of self-determination but of the restoration of the territorial integrity of Spain.

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Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait, today announced that his Government would bear two-thirds of the costs of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) to demonstrate its belief in the role of UNIKOM in safeguarding security and peace in the region. He said the Iraqi regime should be made to understand that its desperate endeavours to have sanctions lifted would be in vain unless it complied legally with the boundary demarcation decisions as set forth in Security Council resolutions.

The international community was responsible for ensuring respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States that fell prey to aggression, he said. Support for States that were victims of aggression should also be provided by the world community. Consolidation of regional security required confidence-building among all countries in the region as a basic premise for attaining that common goal. In that connection, he underlined the close ties and cooperation among Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States, which, he said, contributed substantially to the stability and security of the region.

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Heikki Haavisto, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, yesterday said that the United Nations was now a more viable institution than ever before. Nevertheless, it still had serious shortcomings, stemming primarily from the nature of the problems and challenges of the increasingly interdependent global society. Questioning whether a full-fledged Assembly session was really necessary and productive every year, he suggested that a high-level political debate and the meetings of the Main Committees might be organized every other year.

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The Nordic countries had initiated a reform of United Nations operational activities for development, he continued. There were still details to be settled concerning the governance and financing of the Organization's development agencies, but Finland hoped that the much needed reforms could be agreed upon by the end of the November, so that the new structures could be put in place in 1994. He went on to say that more needed to be done in order to permit the Secretariat to take initiatives and pursue its intellectual leadership role. However, there must also be a pruning of activities and rationalization of working methods, including a cutting of unnecessary and obsolete programmes.

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Ahmud Swalay Kasenally, Minister of External Affairs of Mauritius, told the General Assembly yesterday that the United Nations had earned the growing acceptance of the world community as a legitimate vehicle for addressing significant global issues. However, beneath its regained moral stature were administrative structures and institutions in dire need of reform. Expressing support for the work currently being undertaken by the Secretary-General to revitalize the United Nations, he said such reform should meet the aspirations of the world's peoples and enable the Organization to respond favourably to new expectations.

Mr. Kasenally expressed the hope that the members of the "nuclear club" would adhere to their declared moratoria on testing, for the resumption of nuclear testing by any of them would jeopardize the 1995 Review Conference on the non-proliferation Treaty and undermine global disarmament efforts. He drew attention to the recent positive trend in international affairs and expressed great satisfaction at the emerging consensus in the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean.

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Hikmet Cetin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, said in the general debate yesterday afternoon that most of the threats to international peace were bred in climates of intolerance. Tolerance was the foundation of civil society, he continued, and Turkey would be submitting a draft resolution proposing 1995 as the United Nations Year for Tolerance. Its adoption would help to accelerate the efforts undertaken in the struggle against all forms of fanaticism, fundamentalism, discrimination and prosecution.

Regarding Cyprus, Mr. Cetin said his Government supported the Secretary-General's efforts towards a freely negotiated, just and viable settlement. He said the realization of that objective required goodwill, understanding and patience by both negotiating partners in the island. It was with those considerations that Turkey had endorsed the concept of confidence-building measures, the scope and content of which must be acceptable to both communities. A campaign was under way for early general elections in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and once those were

over, he said, he hoped the Turkish Cypriot side would again play its constructive role in the negotiating process.

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Pascaline Mferri Bongo, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Francophonie of Gabon, yesterday welcomed recent events in South Africa. Addressing the General Assembly, she urged all parties to adhere to the agreement reached and said she hoped that sanctions against South Africa would be lifted and diplomatic relations established with the country. On Somalia, she said the time had come for the international community to give precedence to dialogue and negotiation. She also urged the parties in Liberia, Mozambique and Angola to adhere to agreements reached.

Referring to this year's World Conference on Human Rights, she said Gabon encouraged all United Nations efforts to protect human rights and added that the Organization must adapt its main bodies to the demands of the times. Stressing the importance of preventive diplomacy in world affairs, she described the work of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Consultative Committee on questions of regional security, including the creation of a regional peace-keeping force and the drafting of a non-aggression pact among Member States. She invited the General Assembly to endorse a draft resolution which would be submitted to it on that matter.

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Danielle de St.Jorre, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Planning and the Environment of the Seychelles, said in the general debate yesterday that the oceans were the source of life for island States. Their future depended on the oceans if development was to be lasting. Peace on the oceans was necessary too, she emphasized, saying that the Indian Ocean must become a zone of peace and cooperation for the benefit of coastal States. She urged more countries to ratify the Convention on the Law of the Sea so that it might enter into force.

The world community, she continued, had made the development of democracy a condition for its provision of aid. That criterion had directly influenced change in the world, and most countries had embarked on the democratic process. The Seychelles had met the challenge, but it had entailed increased extra-budgetary expenditure. Based on that experience, she stressed the need to establish a special fund and specific mechanisms to assist small island States in the development of democratic systems. She asked that the same attention be given to them as had been given to landlocked countries.

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A two-day "All Somali Peace Conference" ended today in Mogadishu with the adoption of a joint communique expressing firm support for United Nations efforts in Somalia, and reaffirming the need to establish a transitional

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national council, in accordance with the Addis Ababa Agreement on political reconciliation. The Conference, which involved some 500 participants, was held by 12 of the 15 Somali political movements which had signed the Addis Ababa Agreement.

The joint communique said that the key to restoring peace and security in Somalia was the immediate and total disarmament of the Somali people. It also called for the deployment of United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) forces in all regions of the country, and condemned all attacks on UNOSOM II personnel.

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The Chief of the Emergency Division of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), Robert Souria, announced in Geneva today that DHA had made its first request to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to put its forces on alert, in case they were needed to deal with the effects of the earthquake that occurred earlier this week in India. This new capability, he said, was the result of a recent agreement concluded between DHA and NATO, making military and civil defense forces from NATO's sixteen member countries available to deal with natural disasters. Mr. Souria said that exercises had been held successfully with NATO troops two weeks ago in Vienna, with a simulation of the aftermath of an earthquake.

Mr. Souria said that according to figures relayed this morning from DHA staff members in India, 10,500 deaths had been confirmed so far, with 10,000 people injured as a result of the earthquake. So far, he said, the Government of India had asked only for cash contributions.

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